

8.
SLAVEHOLDING

M A L U M I N S E ,

OR

INVARIABLY SINFUL.

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SLAVEHOLDING

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MALUM IN SE.

WHILE the friends of the slave and of human rights are rapidly enrolling themselves as members of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and participating actively in its noble enterprize, regarding it as the only effective organization for relieving the country of slavery by peaceful measures ; not a few persons of respectability and influence, withhold their support, on the ground that they cannot conscientiously pronounce all slaveholding to be sinful, and every slaveholder guilty. They object, not to the measures of the Society, which they acknowledge are constitutional, but to this sentiment, which is affirmed to be one of its distinctive doctrines. Were we doubtful of its truth and practical utility, we should refer these gentlemen to the Constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society, which declares the sinfulness of slavery in general terms, without asserting the absolute impossibility of innocently holding a slave in any conceivable case. Can the conscientious opponents of slavery *as a system*, hesitate to co-operate under *such* a Constitution with the conscientious opponents of *all* slaveholding ? We choose not, however, to urge their co-operation on this ground, it being our firm persuasion, that they may yet be convinced of the truth of this (at present) repulsive doctrine, and do much, by its recognition and acknowledgement, towards rectifying the public sentiment of the nation, and severing the chains of slavery.

To prove that SLAVEHOLDING IS INVARIABLY SINFUL, is, therefore, the object of these pages.

The design in view demands a definition of slavery, accurately distinguishing it from other kinds of servitude, with which it is apt to be confounded. False definitions are the most fruitful source

and strong support of error respecting the moral character of slaveholding. To one who considers slavery and servitude synonymous terms, our proposition must appear sufficiently absurd to entitle us to public abhorrence and ridicule; to abhorrence for broaching a sentiment so pernicious; to ridicule for soberly defending a position so untenable. As however we do not recognize apprentices, minors and hired servants, as slaves, we are not chargeable with the supreme folly of denouncing these relations. To another, who includes under the term slavery, *all involuntary servitude*, it is not surprising, that our proposition should seem to need some qualification. The services which children, wards, seamen and others, *owe* to their parents, guardians and employers, may be unwillingly rendered, and yet justly exacted. A third, who may confine the word slavery to the single condition of one, who is changed, as far as human law can effect it, into a thing, a commodity, a mere article of traffic, may find no difficulty in admitting the truth of our position, that slaveholding is invariably sinful. We thus see the necessity of planting ourselves on the true definition of slavery, if we would ascertain and publish correct views of its moral nature. This is the more important, since learning and talent will still be tasked to prop its tottering reputation, and repel every assault upon it, by false definitions, artfully concealing the worst elements of the system, and introducing, together with slavery itself, some innocent kind of servitude, lest the withering sentence should go forth: all slaveholding is sinful.

DEFINITION.

SLAVERY IS A DEPRIVATION OF PERSONAL OWNERSHIP.

Enslaving men consists in reducing them to this state, or in making them the property of other persons.

A slave is a person divested of the ownership of himself, and conveyed with all his powers of body and mind, to the absolute proprietorship of another.

Slaveholding is detaining one in this condition, or keeping him subject to the laws of slavery; and the detainer is the slaveholder.

There are two slaveholding powers in all countries, where slavery exists by law; the *master*, and the *government* or civil society. In some states, the master is left at liberty to set his

slaves free, there being no laws against emancipation ; in others, slaves can be legally freed only by the act of some court. In the former case, the government releases the slaves the moment the master declares them free ; in the latter case, the government may hold them in slavery, after their master has released them. No power can constitute or continue a man a slaveholder, without his consent, and in defiance of his own act of manumission. By saying in good faith to his slaves: I now regard you as men, entitled equally with myself, to liberty ; I will never again enforce the laws of slavery against you ; I will give you a pass to leave the state, if you wish it ; I will make no attempt to recover you, if you quit my premises ; I will give you an equivalent for your labor, if you remain in my service—he ceases to be a *slaveholder*, though the government may still retain *his* freedmen in slavery. Laws against emancipation cannot prevent his ceasing at once to be a slaveholder ; they only prevent the slaves from being legally free after *he* has ceased to *hold* them. The government is then the only holder of the slaves, the only power that retains them in slavery ; the only agent responsible for their enslavement. The master, indeed, still shares with his fellow citizens in the responsibilities of the government, if the supreme power vests in the people, and is bound to use his influence against all unjust and unequal laws. He is, however, responsible only for his own acts. The refusal of the government to second his wishes and efforts, may have the effect to retain in slavery those whom he no longer retains in that condition ; but to this his responsibility does not extend. As he neither enslaves them himself, nor sanctions their enslavement, he is not a slaveholder.

A slaveholding government is, therefore, one which authorizes individuals to deprive their fellow men of self-ownership ; and which may also enact, that persons so deprived, shall suffer the deprivation forever, any act of their reputed proprietors to the contrary notwithstanding.

An individual slaveholder, is one, who holds or uses human beings as property ; who retains them in this condition ; who subjects them to the laws of slavery. Artificial persons, as corporations, may also hold slaves. But whoever refuses to exercise the power of an owner, or to keep others in slavery ; whoever disclaims the right and relinquishes the practice, is not a slaveholder, whatever he may have been, and however civil society

may interfere to nullify his acts. A man can no more be made a slaveholder by legislation, without his consent, than by the last will and testament of an individual.

PROOF OF DEFINITION.

First. *The Greeks and Romans describe slavery in nearly the same language.*

Aristotle, the greatest of the ancient philosophers, calls a slave a "living instrument." See the article on Slavery in the American Encyclopædia. As the lower creation is given to man to be a mere minister to his pleasure and convenience, a mere instrument of his good, so, in the view of Aristotle, slaves were held, like cattle, as living *instruments*, as the mere property and appendages of their masters.

In Dr. Taylor's Elements of the Civil Law, (page 429) it is said of Roman slaves, that "they could be sold, transferred or pawned as goods or personal estate; for goods they were, and as such were they esteemed."

Secondly. *The slave-codes of the United States contain in substance the same definition.*

The law of Louisiana, (Stroud, p. 22) declares a slave to be one, "who is in the power of a master, to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry and his labor; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing but what must belong to his master." In South Carolina, (Stroud, p. 23) slaves are "deemed, sold, taken, reputed and adjudged in law to be chattels personal in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators and assigns, to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever." Thus, when the design is to define and establish the slaveholder's claim, the slave is described to be his *absolute property*; not one in the power of a master, but one in the power of a master to whom he belongs; not one who owes labor to another, but one who is himself an article of property, to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever.

Thirdly. *The legislative act of any slaveholding country, prohibiting the holding of man as property, would be an abolition act; yet it would only reinstate in possession of themselves such as had previously been deprived of self-ownership.*

Fourthly. *A title to property invests the owner with that identical power over it, which a master possesses over his slave.*

What we own as property, we may sell. This a master may do with his slaves. To call a system of servitude, which denies the master the power of selling his servant, *slavery*, is believed to be a violation of language—a misapplication of the term.

What we own as property, we may use without consulting the *will* of that property. This a master may do with his slaves. He would scorn the idea of asking them to do his pleasure.

What we own as property we regard as owing obedience to no higher authority than our own. Such is the power of the slaveholder. His will is the supreme law of his slaves. To recognize them as moral beings, accountable to God for their characters and conduct, is inconsistent with their being the absolute property, the mere instruments of another. In all slaveholding countries, the master's interests have ever been held to be primary and paramount; and the slave's duties to God, to his own soul, to his family, to his neighbor, to his country, when in conflict with these interests, have been treated with utter derision.

What we own as property, we claim and possess in virtue of this title solely. So when a slaveholder arrests a fugitive slave, he asserts his claim to him, not as his wife, child, apprentice, or debtor, nor as a fugitive from justice, but as his **PROPERTY**. He pretends to no other authority than that which ownership imparts.

Is it not clear then, that slavery is the condition of one, whose entire property in himself has been transferred to another?

It may at first thought seem an objection to this argument, that the owners of brute animals may dispose of their *lives*, while slave-masters are generally prohibited by law, from depriving their slaves of life. There is, however, in fact, no restriction on the power of the slaveholder other than that which the laws of God and conscience impose. Whoever has the arbitrary power of disposing of all the time of another, of controlling his locomotion, of determining the amount of his labor, the quantity and quality of his food and clothing, and of fixing every thing which appertains to him, can, if he wishes, stop his breath with perfect impunity. It is believed that slaveholders have never felt themselves embarrassed or restrained in any country, in the use of their slaves as absolute property. Nor should it be overlooked that other kinds

of property, as brute animals, are protected by law, against wanton cruelty. Their owners are indeed allowed to dispose of their lives; for this is a legitimate use of such property. To destroy an able bodied slave, on the other hand, is not a use; it is a destruction of property; and as to disabled and worthless slaves, forbidding the master to destroy them, and requiring him to support them, is only taxing his business; it is like a bonus for the privilege of banking, which surely does not sift the chattel-principle from bank stock.

Fifthly. *No other definition of slavery embraces all who are slaves and no others.*

A definition which excludes any who are entirely bereft of property in themselves, involves the absurdity, that common and correct usage forbids our calling him a slave who is held as a commodity, or mere article of property. As persons in this condition are confessedly slaves, a definition to be correct, must include them. But can it include any others? What others? Not apprentices, not wards, not children, not seamen, not soldiers, not subjects, not any class of dependents or servants, of whom it may be said, that they own themselves. There can be no doubt that a correct definition of slavery may be given in different terms from ours, but not one of less or greater comprehension. The same definition may be expressed in a great variety of forms. A deprivation of personal ownership for instance, is the same as an entire deprivation of natural liberty. Slavery is a species of absolute despotism. A slaveholder is an arbitrary sovereign. And vice versa, a despot so absolute that he can dispose, as he pleases, of the time, labor, and person of his subject, may act the part of a slaveholder. Since, however, in governments reputedly despotic, the sovereign, though not limited by law, is removed at a great distance from his subjects, is restrained by his fears and interests in the exercise of his arbitrary power, and especially, as the theory of all governments is the good of the governed, and, in the worst despotisms, the people as a body, are left in the possession of domestic and civil rights; it is only in a qualified sense that they can be called slaves, and their sovereigns slaveholders. Were slavery, however, defined to be the condition of one who is entirely deprived of his natural liberty, or subjected to the arbitrary control of another; the truth of the definition would lie in its identity with a deprivation of personal ownership. A despotism, which leaves its sub-

ject in possession of himself, is not of that absolute kind, which is denominated slavery in the logical sense of the word. What usage sanctions calling him a slave, who possesses and uses his body, and mental powers, for the accomplishment of his own ends?

That no definition, which is not in substance the same as ours, is correct, may appear more conclusively, by reference to the definitions, which the apologists for slavery, in certain circumstances, or in the abstract, have fabricated.

We have heard it said that one who owes labor to another is a slave. Then children, apprentices, and hired servants, during the term of their engagements, are slaves!

Some have defined slavery *involuntary servitude*. Then impressed seamen, and even reluctant jurors and militia-men, are slaves!

Some insist that *uncompensated servitude* is slavery. This is indeed a common element of the condition, but it is neither the whole of it, nor an *essential* part of it. Negro slavery is invariably *uncompensated servitude*; because, as the slave cannot legally hold property, it is impossible he should receive pay for his services. By allowing him to redeem himself, his master does not remunerate him for his labor; he simply agrees to cease robbing him of his wages and of his person, after he shall have completed a specified amount of unrequited work. But it follows not that slavery cannot exist where wages are paid, nor that the robbery of wages, is the whole of slavery. Roman slaves could hold property, and therefore could receive compensation, at the discretion of their master; while in other respects they were subject to his irresponsible control and disposal. Nor is it an unfrequent occurrence for freemen to labor without remuneration. An innocent man may be condemned to hard labor in a State's prison. Is he, therefore, a slave? A hired man may be defrauded out of his just wages. A. may compel B. to go a mile with him, and B. may go two miles, without compensation; and yet not be a slave. A man may be forced to serve in the British Navy for twelve dollars a month, when he might earn greater wages at home. Is the English tar, therefore, a slave? No. To create a slave requires something more than the robbery of things that perish in the using. The man himself must be stolen.

The subjects of a despotic government are sometimes said to be slaves. They may or may not be such. An absolute autocrat

may divest his subjects of all rights, may make them mere tools, mere merchandize; yet in doing so, he would transcend his legitimate power; for sovereignty was not conferred on him, as a means of oppression, but for the defence of the people. The autocracy of the slaveholder, on the other hand, looks exclusively to his own good. To use his subject as a mere tool, without rights, is no abuse; it is the legitimate use of his supremacy. The most absolute monarch transcends his legitimate power, when he treats any of his subjects as absolute slaves; while the real slaveholder is only acting appropriately.

Some insist, that State's prison convicts are slaves, because they are confined at hard labor, and receive no compensation. But who is ignorant that whether their condition is the same as that of slaves or not, they have never borne this name; and that the proposition, "all slaveholding is sinful," cannot be supposed to refer to them?

We find in the Christian Spectator, vol. vi. page 339, the following definition:

"Slavery is that artificial relation or civil constitution, by which one man is invested with a property in the labor of another, to whom, by virtue of that relation, he owes the duties of protection, support and government, and who owes him in return, obedience and submission."

Apprentices are here described to be slaves; for the apprenticeship system 'is a civil constitution, by which one man, the master, is invested with a property in the labor of another, the apprentice, to whom, by virtue of that relation, the master owes the duties of protection, support and government, and who owes him in return, obedience and submission!'

Indeed we know of no definition which excludes any who are the property of their masters, or includes any who are not their property, which does not involve an absurdity. The well known use of the term slavery, forbids its application, in a literal sense, to despotic governments, to imprisonment for crime, to the apprenticeship, or to any of those forms of servitude, which reject the chattel principle.

Sixthly. We will only add, that *our definition corresponds precisely with the ordinary notions and language of men.*

How common is the complaint, that abolitionists demand of our

southern brethren, the surrender, not of their children, apprentices, or servants, but of their **PROPERTY**.

This, then, is the sense, in which we use, and *ought to be understood to use*, the term slavery, when we pronounce the practice, invariably sinful. How ungenerous and unjust, it is, in our opponents, to deny the truth of this doctrine, and then rest their denial solely on definitions, which represent that to be slavery, which is not, and which is evidently not contained in our definition! Many of them acknowledge that what we, for no mean reasons, say is slavery, and the whole of slavery, is invariably sinful; and, at the same time, hold us up to public reprobation for maintaining a doctrine so untenable and uncharitable*. We hope for better things. Let them prove that a deprivation of personal ownership is not the condition of all slaves, and of no others; or that such a deprivation is consistent with morality; or else let them become our friends and coadjutors. That other kinds of servitude have sometimes been called slavery, by loose writers, and in the fervid language of poetry and eloquence, is perfectly compatible with the above definition, in which is given the ordinary, proper, logical sense of the word, and not its figurative significations.

SLAVERY ESSENTIALLY UNLIKE OTHER KINDS OF SERVITUDE.

* Deprivation of self-ownership involves an annihilation of man's natural liberty, and a practical denial of his moral nature, degrading him from his proper rank to the condition of a thing; and therefore slavery is clearly distinguishable from those conditions and relations, with which it is often confounded; some of which are innocent, and indispensable to the well being and very

*Christian Spectator for 1834, p. 337. Review of Phelps' Lectures on Slavery and its Remedy. "This definition of slavery" (the same in substance as ours) "is a very compendious method of proving that the relation of the slaveholder to his slaves, is invariably, simply and inexcusably sinful. Our objection to it, is, that it is not a definition of all servitude," (Mr. Phelps intended to define only one species of servitude, viz. slavery,) "but only of that servitude" (namely, slavery) "which implies sin on the part of the master. It was obviously framed with a view to the proposition:—All slaveholding is criminal. It was framed by a mind desirous of giving to its own positions a fair aspect, at least, of reason and consistency, and seeking a basis on which to construct the doctrine of immediate emancipation,—a doctrine that shall make every master of slaves, in all conceivable circumstances, and without any possibility of explanation or defence, an oppressor, a manstealer, a pirate, an enemy of the human race." Here it is virtually conceded, that if our definition is correct, all slaveholding is sinful, and the only objection urged against the definition, is, "that it is not a definition of *all servitude*!"

existence of civilized society. Yet as this confounding of things so radically different, is the source of many mistakes respecting the moral character of slavery; it will be useful to set the distinction between them in the light of our definition.

Slavery denies two fundamental, immutable distinctions between persons and things; which is not true of any other kind of servitude. The distinctions are these. A person has rights; a thing has no rights. A person is a subject of moral obligation; a thing is not. We will notice these in their order.

1. *A person has rights; a thing has no rights.* Self-ownership is an original endowment of every human being—the nucleus around which his other rights gather—the circumference within which they all lie. That every man is naturally the owner of himself—the proprietor of his body and mind—is one of those first truths, which need no argument to establish, which unperturbed minds universally acknowledge, which is recognized in the phrases, common to all languages, *my limbs, my body, my mind*. This is the only right, or comprehends all the rights, original to man, inherent in human nature, the birth-rights of our race. All other rights depend on this for their validity. Among them is the right to the term or time of one's life. This is a necessary incident to self-ownership; for it is only in time, that one can employ his powers of body and mind for the good of himself and others. Man has also a natural right to the proceeds of his labor and ingenuity. The inventor of a machine is the natural owner of the invention; it being the product of his industry, time and skill. On the same principle, if a person labors in the service of another, viz. to raise grain or manufacture cloth, he has a natural right to the same proportion of the grain or cloth, or its equivalent, which the value of his labor bears to the capital invested by his employer. These are some of the natural rights of man. The existence of such rights *in a state of nature*, none will dispute. Man may also *acquire* rights. Whether the entire catalogue can be innocently withheld from men, is not our present inquiry, it being our sole object to state a distinction between persons and things; for which purpose we bring into view this acknowledged attribute of persons in a state of nature, the *possession of rights*.

What is thus true of persons, is not true of things. As a thing is not the owner of itself, but the absolute property of another, it

has no rights; its very being is designed for the good of its proprietor. A wild animal, roaming free in its native forests, is liable, without any infringement of right, to be slain by its fellow or by the arm of man. It may be said in a qualified, figurative sense, that brutes have, in the language of philosophers, *imperfect* rights; as a right to humane treatment. But though a horse has a right to kind usage, it is only when such usage is compatible with the interests of man. His owner may whip him, overwork him, and even kill him for his own real interests, without infringing any right of the horse. This, then, is a wide and striking distinction between persons and things. A person has natural rights, and may acquire others; a thing has no rights either natural or acquired; at least none which are not secondary to the interests of man, and hence improperly denominated rights. As the whole lower creation is a gift of the Creator to man; as we may rightfully use any of these inferior things as property; it is impossible they should have any interests or claims, which can prevail against ours. They stand in a relation to us, analogous to that which we sustain to God. They are made for our pleasure, as we were made for His.

Slavery is a practical oversight and denial of this grand distinction; regarding man as a mere thing so far as rights are concerned; as the gift of God to another, and not the owner of himself; as a proper instrument for the sole gratification of his master; as one of the fish, or fowls, or beasts of the earth, which realize the highest capabilities of their nature and the noblest end of their existence, by becoming articles of property.

2. *A person is a subject of moral obligation; a thing is not.* Rights and duties are correlative terms. My possession of rights imposes on all others an obligation to respect them; and I in turn am bound to respect their rights. Man sustains the relation of a subject to the government of God, and the relations of parent, husband, child, neighbor, citizen, to his fellow creatures, each requiring specific services, which he cannot innocently neglect. The very reverse is true of things. They are incapable of recognizing the existence of rights and duties. They sustain no moral relations whatever. Slavery disregards this distinction. By depriving man of the possession, control and use, of his own body, time and will, of his wife, children and property, it incapacitates him to discharge the obligations enjoined in the divine law. Whatever

duties he succeeds in performing, he performs in despite of slavery, which does its utmost to annihilate his free agency, by substituting the will of another in the place of his will.

These two fundamental distinctions between persons and things, which slavery so utterly and uncereimoniously overlooks, are recognized in other kinds of servitude.

The rights of children, wards and apprentices are recognized, and their interests consulted, in the relation which they severally sustain to their parents, guardians and masters. They are not treated as mere things, but as persons having rights and owing obedience, as free agents, to the divine law. They own themselves. The difference between their condition and that of the slave, is the same which exists between the natural state of a person and the natural state of a thing; between proprietorship and property; between an owner and the thing owned; between the possession of rights and an entire deprivation of them.

A hired servant is regarded as the possessor of rights, as the owner of himself, as a moral being, as a man, and not as a thing. His labor is voluntary and compensated. The relation between him and his employer exists for their mutual benefit. He is himself one of the contracting parties. Some, who arrogate to themselves the reputation of good sense and discrimination, have ventured to call the laborers, in our factories, *slaves*, because they dare not neglect the business and disobey the orders of their employers. But they are no more slaves than the merchant, who dares not offend his customers. Their employers are their customers—the purchasers of their labor. It is the fear of losing this market, and not a dread of the lash, which influences them. They dare not neglect the interests of their employers, on account of a personal interest, which they have in the employment. They dare not be vicious, idle or unfaithful, for fear of being dismissed from a relation, in the continuance of which they are deeply interested. But the slave! What urges him to fidelity in his unrequited, hopeless task? The fear of punishment. Here is contrast enough, but no comparison. The one is actuated by the love of compensation, the hope of reward; the other is moved, like an ox or a horse, by the fear of outrage and violence.

The subjects of a despotic king are recognized as persons having rights, and not as mere things. They own themselves. This is not saying that a despotie, oppressive government is not an un-

righteous usurpation of authority. It is so ; yet it is not that specific form of oppression, to which common and correct usage applies the name, slavery.

A deprivation of civil rights, as the elective franchise and eligibility to office, is no denial of the distinctive attributes of a person. Such disfranchisement divests none of any natural rights, and sinks none in the least degree below the condition of man. Females, minors, the free people of color in some states, and many other persons, have not the right of suffrage and are ineligible to office ; yet they are not treated as mere things, are not deprived of self-ownership. There may be very great wrong in depriving some men of civil rights ; yet it is plainly distinguishable from an entire deprivation of rights, from making man a thing, the mere instrument of another.

No mere restraint on the natural liberty of men can be construed into a denial of their personality. The object of law, in all cases, is to restrain the freedom of men. When we enter into society, it is by our mutual consent and for our mutual interest, that we submit to the restraints of impartial law on our freedom, lest freedom itself should be no blessing, lest property, reputation and life ; should all be lost in universal anarchy. A man thus restrained is not divested of the prerogatives of his nature ; is not treated as a thing.

Mere compulsory servitude does not annihilate man's rights, and utterly deny his accountability to God. We may be summoned against our will, to serve on a jury, to do military duty, to remove nuisances, to educate our children : yet we are not thereby treated as things without rights ; for we have an interest in common with our fellow citizens, in the administration of justice, in the defence of the country, and in all the wholesome regulations of civil society. We are not divested of our rights, but taxed for their protection.

Mere cruelty, however atrocious, is not reducing man to a level with the brute, by an entire deprivation of his rights. The most shocking cruelties have been inflicted on freemen ; while the most abject slaves are sometimes attired in costly apparel and fed on the richest dainties of the land. They are clothed in silks, and indulged in luxurious idleness, merely to gratify the pride or the lusts of their masters. Mere cruelty can no more reduce a man

to the condition of a thing, than these indulgences can elevate him from it.

Nor is the servitude of criminals, as of State's prison convicts, a denial of the two grand distinctions between persons and things. Having a common interest with others in the supremacy of law, they are punished for crime, not as mere things, but as persons possessing rights; for their punishment consists in depriving them of a part, and a part only of their rights. They owe a debt to society, which they are bound to pay by bearing the just penalty of the law. But though they may be condemned to solitary confinement and hard labor for life, in the service of the State; it does not amount to a deprivation of personal ownership, to an entire divestiture of rights, to an annihilation of the distinction between persons and things. No one owns them; no one may sell them. The government cannot transfer the entire control of them to another power, with the right to hold them, and dispose of them as mere things. No such right is ever asserted. They have legal security against any inflictions and deprivations not included expressly in the sentence of the law. Their children, born after their imprisonment, are free, showing that they are not, like cattle and slaves, considered mere things, the absolute property of others. They are recognized in most, if not all, the States of this confederacy, not as civilly dead, but as still sustaining in law, the various relations of life. A pardon would restore them at once, the owner to his property, the husband to his wife, the citizen to his political privileges; to rights which they never forfeited, and which they ceased to enjoy only as an *incident* to their punishment. Depriving them of the liberty of locomotion, and of the avails of their labor, in just retribution for their crimes, is neither an intentional nor actual denial of their personality, of their right to be treated as men, and not as things. An imprisoned *debtor* is deprived of locomotion and of his time; but not of self-ownership; not of all his rights. Compelling him to labor in jail for the liquidation of his debts, would not render him, even for the time being, the absolute property and instrument of his creditor. To suppose him such would imply, that every laborer, who owes services for wages paid in advance, and is forced to render them, is the property of his employer. Nor is there any essential difference between the condition of a debtor, imprisoned at hard labor for the benefit of his creditor, and the condition of a convict, who is

forced in like manner to pay his debt to society. In neither case is man struck from existence as the possessor of rights. We have here, however, a closer approximation to slavery than any other kind of servitude, which dispenses with the chattel principle as an element; for while the two grand distinctions between persons and things are neither denied nor overlooked in the punishment of the criminal; yet he is divested of an unusually large share of his natural rights.

SLAVEHOLDING INVARIABLY SINFUL.

This is the main question at issue. The preceding definition and explanations are given to guide us to a correct conclusion, on this important, practical point: Is slaveholding a *malum in se*, an act essentially, inherently, necessarily, invariably sinful?

An obvious distinction exists between mala in se, and mala per accidentia vel consequentia; the former, *actions wrong in themselves*, being essentially and invariably sinful; the latter, *actions made wrong by circumstances*, or *certain evil consequences not necessary to them*, being variable in their moral character.

An action in itself right, may in some circumstances be wrong; and therefore a change of circumstances may again make it right. Illustrations of this are familiar to every one.

A single man is acquainted with two unmarried women. It is right for him to marry either of them. He marries one. Circumstances have now changed, so that he cannot innocently marry the other. His wife dies. The circumstance which made it wrong for him to marry the other person is removed, and he can now lawfully marry her.

It is in itself right to go from Hartford to New York, either by land or by water. But if you have promised to meet a friend in New York to-morrow, at so early an hour, that you cannot reach there in season except by water; this circumstance would render it wrong to attempt the journey by land. Were you, however, to receive a letter, in the interim, from your friend, stating that it would be equally convenient for him, to meet you on a future day, affording you ample time for the journey, by either mode; this circumstance would again render it right for you to take the stage instead of the steamboat.

It was not in itself wrong for Paul to eat meats offered to idols. It became wrong, when it appeared, that certain weak believers

would understand him to eat in honor of the idol, and be tempted by his example to practice idolatry. As the eating of such meats was wrong only on account of the presence of weak believers, it became right for the apostle again to eat in their absence. The circumstances of their *presence* and *weak faith* made the act wrong; a change in these circumstances would, therefore, render the act right.

But it is otherwise with acts wrong in themselves; which, as they are not made wrong by circumstances, can be right in no change of circumstances. Such, for instance, is blasphemy. It is wrong under all circumstances to blaspheme God: for blasphemy is not made wrong by circumstances; it is in itself wrong.

Some deny this evident distinction between *mala in se*, and *mala per consequentia*, on the ground that the moral character of an action depends solely on the *intention* of the actor, and not in the least on the *mode* or *form* of the act. A man knocks another down. If he does it with a malicious intention, he sins; but if by accident, without design, or in righteous self-defence, he is guiltless. In each case the *form* of the action is the same; yet the moral character of the act is in one instance sinful, and in the other innocent, if not virtuous. This, it is averred, is true universally, the form of an action affording no infallible criterion, by which to determine its moral nature. The inference is, that slaveholding may be right; that it is improper to declare it sinful in all cases, since we cannot read the master's heart, and he may *mean* it for the exclusive good of the slave.

The fallacy of this argument lies in the false assumption, that the intention of an actor can never be inferred from the mode or form of his action. So far from truth is this, that certain forms of action, when adopted by free agents, or in the exercise of free agency, are infallible tests and exponents of bad motives. Although blasphemy in the mouth of a maniac is no indication of a blaspheming mind, in the mouth of a free agent, it demonstrates a corrupt heart as the source of it. We cannot address the Supreme Being in terms of reproach with good intentions. The same is true of all those modes of action, which invariably and necessarily tend to the dishonor of God, to the detriment of his kingdom, to the violation of justice; as idolatry, adultery, lying and stealing. All those precepts of the Bible, which interdict certain *modes* of action, without indicating or admitting exceptions, are based on the as-

sumption, that actions of these forms are too evidently improper and pernicious to be adopted with right intentions. They are not prohibitions of blasphemous, adulterous, fraudulent, murderous *intentions* merely, but of certain *modes* of action in which the mind cannot act freely with other intentions. The repugnance of these modes of action to good morals is in many cases intuitive, and is always so on the surface of things as to be easily and certainly ascertained by every honest inquirer ; by which the possibility of adopting them with honest intentions, is effectually prevented. No one can act virtuously in modes, which he is not satisfied, by faithful inquiry, are lawful ; and he cannot be misled in his inquiries but by a heart which vitiates all the actions of man.

We do not question that a slaveholder may think he is holding slaves for their exclusive benefit. This may be the motive for holding them, of which he is most conscious. Other motives, however, may give their moral coloring to his conduct. A sinful prejudice against his slaves ; a contempt of their powers ; a disregard of their rights as men ; an unwillingness to acknowledge at once his own wrong ; a fear of displeasing other slaveholders ; a selfish shrinking from the losses and inconveniences of immediate emancipation ; may indispose him to judge impartially respecting their interests. The state of the heart—the ultimate as well as the proximate motive—is to be considered in deciding the moral character of an action. Should a physician take the life of a patient, of whose recovery he despairs, impelled by a compassionate desire to relieve him from suffering, this motive would not sanctify the deed. The act would derive its character from the state of mind—the culpable disregard of human life—the contempt of God's law : Thou shalt not kill—in which it originated. So also, if a person should steal merely to relieve the wants of a suffering family, the motive, however benevolent and praiseworthy, would not justify him. The ultimate motive—the bad state of heart—which made him willing to gratify his pity for an object of distress, by wronging another person, decides the character of his conduct. Thus mala in se, or actions wrong in themselves, can never be perpetrated with virtuous intentions. Stealing and other acts of this class, cannot be changed into virtues, by springing from good motives. The wrong is too palpable.

Slaveholding, we claim, belongs to this class of actions ; it is a *malum in se*, a sin independent of circumstances. The argument

in proof of this, we shall arrange under several distinct divisions, exhibiting it in various attitudes, for the purpose of affecting minds of every grade and construction.

1. Slaveholding in its *mildest* form is an *unwarrantable degradation of human beings*. Man is created in the image of God; made a little lower than the angels; crowned with glory and honor; placed on a throne to be lord and proprietor of the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and every living thing that moveth on the earth. He is formed to seek happiness, to discharge duties, to scatter blessings, in this elevated sphere of action. Slavery dethrones him; thrusts him down from his exalted state to a place among the brutes; subjects him to a condition for which he was not made; to which he is not adapted; where he cannot act himself; where nothing human is left free and unimpaired but a susceptibility to suffering. Can governments ever innocently sanction such an outrage? Can individuals innocently commit it? We think not. The declarations of the Bible, and in this case, the equally explicit voice of nature, teach that man was made to have dominion over the lower creation, not to fraternize with it. So evident is this that we must forget the manhood of the slave, before we can excuse the enslaver. Said the celebrated Montesquieu: 'We must not admit that the Negro is a man, lest it should follow that we are not Christians.' This unwarrantable degradation of man from his original and proper rank in creation, to an article of property, to the place and uses of a thing, is not an *accident* of slavery; it is the very essence of the thing; its cardinal principle; that which must enter into a system of servitude to constitute it slavery; that, without which there cannot be a slave. A deprivation of self-ownership—this is the unwarrantable degradation of man—and this is inseparable from slavery; it is slavery itself; and hence every act of slaveholding is essentially sinful.

Should any think this argument inconsistent with the right of punishing crime by imprisonment, since this is placing man in an unnatural condition, where he cannot discharge the ordinary duties of life; we would refer them to this grand distinction between the two cases. While slavery pours contempt on the image of God, by pronouncing man a legitimate piece of property; imprisonment for crime honors that image, by vindicating his violated rights: and while slavery removes man from his appropriate sphere of light, usefulness and enjoyment, to a land of darkness,

sterility and wo; imprisonment for crime is a just measure of defence to society against the example and violence of a useless and unworthy member. Nor should it be overlooked, that the criminal loses by imprisonment, nothing but his place in society—he does not sink to the level of a thing—he is still regarded as a man.

2. *Slaveholding is invariably a usurpation of divine authority.* Man is responsible to God for the use of his powers. His faculties are his own, only in relation to his fellow creatures. They belong in the strictest sense to his Creator. The wicked of ancient times were censured for saying: ‘Are not our tongues our own?’ As we exist for the pleasure of God, we are bound to employ our powers of thought, of speech, of feeling, of execution, in obedience to the principles and precepts of His word. Hence we cannot alienate the *entire* control of our faculties; and no one can, without usurpation, exercise or hold *such* power over us. We may pass to others the use of our “tongues,” under limitations, which leave us still at liberty to govern them by a supreme regard to the will of God. The assertion of a more absolute control over us, is subversive of the rights of the divine government; it is dethroning God by making the will of man paramount. Such is the power of the slaveholder, by which the will of the slave is subjected, on pain of fearful penalties, to the absolute dictation of another. He may be legally required to sin against God, by restraining prayer and exhortation, by whipping his parents, by lying, by sabbath-breaking, by adultery; and in case of refusal, be doomed to excruciating punishment. Surely society can *never* rightfully confer such power, nor can individuals innocently possess it. It is that despotic power, which cannot be exercised without oppression, and which it is, therefore, sinful to confer or hold. It is idle to say, that one is guiltless for claiming and holding this power, provided he does not exercise it. He cannot fail to exercise it. He necessarily interferes with freedom of conscience and moral agency, by forcibly detaining another in a condition, where the duties of parents, children, friends, citizens, christians, cannot be freely and fully discharged. Whatever liberty may be allowed a *slave*, he must suffer restraint in regard to plans of prospective duty, enjoyment and usefulness: he is not free to serve God. Yet were the slaveholder’s power not employed to involve the slave in sin either of commission or omission: the mere possession is usurpation; it is claiming and holding divine

power ; it is laying hands on a prerogative of Jehovah ; it is reducing man to complete dependence on the will of his fellow, and holding him under legal liability to be forced against his conscience and his duty ; it is, in short, placing one man in the condition of God to another, than which it is difficult to conceive of sin, more inherent, palpable and presumptuous.

3. *Slaveholding is an unwarrantable infringement of the natural rights of man.* Natural rights are those which belong to every human being by nature, and which are founded on the faculties with which the Creator has endowed us. Each power of body or mind is such an endowment, conferring on man the right to possess and use it for his own good, the good of others, and the glory of God. Such, for example, is the gift of vision. God has conferred on man the sense of sight. It is, therefore, the divine will that he should see. Hence it is his right to see ; and this right imposes on all other men the obligation of respecting it. Apply this example to the case before us. Man has a natural title to all the immunities and privileges involved in self-ownership ; to all the rights which are based on the several endowments of his body and mind. He has an original, absolute, perfect right, (restrained only by impartial law) to his time, to the fruits of his industry and skill, to the use and improvement of his understanding, to the free exercise of religion, to personal liberty, to personal security, to acquire, hold and disburse property, to marry, to rule his own house, to pursue and communicate happiness. As all these rights are common to the human race, being founded on the common endowments of men, and given by the Creator to man as man, it is plainly the will of God, that each man should have the benefit of them ; and therefore it must needs be a violation of his will to infringe any one of them, even in the person of the feeblest and meanest of mankind. Slavery, however, infringes them all. By one fell act it blots man from existence as the possessor of rights. He loses his will, his freedom, his personality, in the loss of himself. Slaveholding is, therefore, not a sin "singular," but a "complication of villanies," as one, not inaptly, not too harshly, expresses it. The master, who deprives his slave of one right, constantly commits at least one sin against God and man. By depriving him of ten rights, he constantly commits ten sins. If he deprives a hundred slaves of ten rights each, he continually commits a thousand sins, as a slaveholder. Nor is it possible

so to modify slavery that it shall be other than the robbery of human rights ; it being essentially a deprivation of self-ownership, the generic right of man ; the right on which all his specific rights depend.

Some of the natural rights of man may be forfeited to society ; in which case it is no violation of right to take them away. Punishments for crime must necessarily consist in deprivations and inflictions, with which to visit an innocent man, would be a violation of right. Crime is, therefore, a forfeiture of rights in all cases, where the deprivation of them, is a proper and just punishment. Self-ownership, the aggregate of human rights, however, is unforfeitable ; not that slavery would be an excessive, unmerited retribution for some crimes ; but because it lacks some of the essential characteristics of punishment, viz. *certainty of execution, equality, security to society, consistency with public virtue and moral rectitude.*

Certainty of execution. Suppose society undertakes to punish a criminal by offering him for sale to the highest bidder. The purchaser becomes his absolute owner. The next day, it may be, he emancipates him, or leaves him to heirs ; or to creditors, who refuse to enforce the title ; or the slave, having no prison-walls about him, makes his escape.

Equality of punishment. One criminal would fall, by slavery, into the hands of a natural tyrant ; another, equally guilty, into the hands of a kind hearted man. One would soon be released ; another would be held in slavery for life. One, the adroitest and guiltiest rogue of the two, would effect his escape ; another of less capacity would make the attempt, only to be re-taken and barbarously punished.

Security to society. Enslaved criminals would constitute a dangerous class in the community. The talents, the knowledge, the depravity of such men, as are ordinarily guilty of crimes, for which slavery is not a punishment immeasurably too severe, would render it extremely hazardous to allow them even a slave's liberty of locomotion. It would undoubtedly lead to the commission of more crime than it would prevent ; and thus defeat the very object of punishment, the peace and security of society.

Consistency with public virtue. The possession of irresponsible power tends directly to sour the temper, to inflate the pride, to exasperate the passions of the slaveholder, and to subject the

slave to unavoidable participation in the sins of others. Were it the design of government to introduce into society an engine of the most tremendous power and nice adaptation to corrupt the morals of the people; to contract and counteract the influence of the gospel, slavery might fairly claim the unenviable distinction.

Moral rectitude. Punishment must also be consistent with the fundamental principles of morality. Man can never forfeit his right to act virtuously, and society can never acquire a right to treat him viciously; to subject him to a condition or to usage at variance with the divine law. No government can rightfully make prostitution, the renunciation of religion, hard labor on the Sabbath, or the commission of any other sin, a punishment for crime; because the right to be virtuous cannot be forfeited. Hence self-ownership is strictly inalienable. We cannot forfeit a right, except to one who has a right to exact the forfeiture. But slavery imparts to the master a power of compulsion and restraint utterly inconsistent with the moral agency of the slave; with a conscientious and virtuous course of life; with a fulfilment of the duties of a husband, father, child and friend; while it also sends its poisonous influence through all the ranks of life. A government would be false to its trust to punish a criminal by *such* servitude, than which there is no deadlier foe to public virtue, security and thrift; and the individual, who should purchase or hold him, would sin against his own soul by assuming such despotic power, and against his family by admitting a felon among them. As, therefore, society cannot accept the forfeiture of personal ownership, it cannot be forfeited; and whoever is deprived thereof, is suffering an unwarrantable deprivation of rights; a deprivation, which society cannot innocently sanction, which individuals cannot innocently inflict.

In reference, doubtless, to this fact that slavery is deficient in many essential characteristics of punishment, the author of an able article on slavery in the *Encyclopædia Americana*, vol. xi. p. 430, thus expresses himself. "We do not consider that either individuals or governments have any right to dispose of the lives of the vanquished; *nor are even criminals allowed to be made slaves in the full sense of the word.*"

As self-ownership cannot be forfeited by crime; neither can it be alienated by any other act. It is inherent in human nature. It cannot be lost by birth, by gift, by contract, or by captivity.

The writer quoted above, justly observes in the same article ; "Slavery can never be a legal relation. It rests entirely on force. The slave being treated as property, and not allowed legal rights, cannot be under legal obligation. Slavery is, also, inconsistent with the moral nature of man. Each man has an individual worth, significance and responsibility, is bound to the work of self-improvement, and to labor in a sphere for which his capacity is adapted. To give up his individual liberty is to disqualify himself for fulfilling the great objects of his being. Hence political societies, which have made a considerable degree of advancement, *do not allow any one to resign his liberty any more than his life, to the pleasure of another.*" It is as clearly and essentially wicked for a man to sell himself into absolute slavery, as it is to commit suicide. Judge Blackstone takes the same views. Without alluding to the punishment of crime as a *possible basis for slavery*, he declares, in his Commentaries, that the other three origins of the practice, are all builded on false foundations. He denies that a captor can innocently reduce his captive to slavery ; that a man can sell himself into slavery, or that one can be born a slave. Wesley lays down the same doctrine by denying that one man can in any way become the rightful property of another. "You," he says, "first acted the villain in making them slaves, whether you stole them or bought them." "Have you, has *any man living, a right to use another as a slave?* It cannot be, even setting revelation aside. Neither war nor contract can give any man such a property in another as he has in his sheep and oxen. Much less is it possible that any child of man should ever be born a slave. Liberty is the right of every human creature as soon as he breathes the vital air ; and no human law can deprive him of that right, which he derives from the law of nature. If therefore you have any regard for justice, to say nothing of mercy or of the revealed law of God, render unto all their due. Give liberty, to whom liberty is due, to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature."

These positions appear to us to be perfectly tenable, and to comprehend every possible case of slaveholding. As mankind are all created free ; as they are endowed by their Creator with birth-rights ; as the sum total of these rights can in no way be alienated ; it would seem, that every slave is *now* the rightful owner of himself, and fully entitled to liberty. Having been de-

prived of self-ownership wrongfully, no one ever had, no one could convey, no one could acquire a valid title to him. His title to himself remains, and must remain unimpaired. Though he may have passed through the hands of ten thousand claimants to his body and soul, he is still in right and justice, his own proprietor. He is a wronged man, into whosoever hands he may fall, until he falls into possession of himself; and the slaveholder is the wrong doer. The same principle applies universally. The rule admits of no exceptions. So says the irrefutable doctrine, that self-ownership is an *inalienable right*; for enslaving men is divesting them of this right. If the right is inalienable, taking it away under any circumstances, is **STEALING**.

4. *It can never be right to sanction, by our example, a principle, which cannot be generally adopted without damage to the community; and therefore slaveholding is a malum in se, an act invariably sinful.* Our argument, thus far, is based on the doctrine of *rights*, human and divine. We have yet to enter the heavy charge against slavery, that it is necessarily subversive of human *interests*, both for time and eternity, both in the person of the slave and his master. This single topic demands the limits of our entire article, to do it the semblance of justice; indeed the materials which it presents are well nigh inexhaustible. We can only give a very imperfect outline of the argument by showing what are some of the legitimate and unavoidable effects of slavery on the temporal and spiritual interests of the parties; and that holding a slave, on any pretence, is sanctioning the principle, from which issues this river of blood and abominations.

Slavery corrupts the morals of the people both bond and free. The slave is a *liar*, because he is a slave. His dependent, exposed and helpless condition, makes him a hypocrite by profession. The business of his life is to deceive his master. While he is cursing him in his heart, he avows strong affection for him; and while liberty is the day dream of his existence, he expresses perfect contentment with his lot. He pretends sickness to avoid his unrequited task, and lies at every turn to conceal the unavoidable mistakes or real faults, for which he dreads the lash of the overseer. He is a *thief*, because he is a slave. This is proverbial. True, he considers it merely making reprisals for the robbery of his wages; a point in casuistry which we shall not now attempt to settle. Instigated by the desire of food in greater quantity or

variety, than is commonly enjoyed by men in his condition, he purloins not only from his master, what is rightfully his own, but from the neighbors of his master. He is a *Sabbath breaker*, because he is a slave. Neither the example nor precepts of slaveholders are apt to teach the slave the sacredness of the day, which is allotted him for recreation, for cultivating his garden, for washing and mending his garments, for trading and visiting friends. He is also *licentious*, because he is a slave. He has no character, no marriage rights, no power of resistance to his master's will; and how can he have any sense of obligation to the seventh commandment? He is a *murderer*, because he is a slave. He hates his oppressor. His bosom is often agitated with a spirit of revenge. We do not say, that all slaves are guilty of these sins habitually, but that the *tendency* of slavery is to make them, in a greater degree than they otherwise would be, regardless, in all these respects, of the restraints and requirements of the moral law.

Slavery is no less destructive to the morals of the masters. In the *Encyclopædia Americana*, vol xi. p. 432, it is truly said: "The effects of slavery have always been most injurious to the nations, that have permitted it. It is so directly opposed to the nature of man (which can as little endure absolute power as absolute subjection, without greatly degenerating) that it has always had a palsying influence on the industry and *morality* both of the *masters* and the slaves." The remarks of Mr. Jefferson in his Notes on Virginia, are valuable as the testimony of a slaveholder. He says: "The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism, on the one part, and degrading submission on the other. Our children see this and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. If a parent had no other motive, either in his own philanthropy or his self-love, for restraining the intemperance of passion towards his slave, it should always be a sufficient one, that his child is present. But generally it is not sufficient. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose to his worst passions, and thus nursed, educated and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities." The testimony of the best witnesses might be multiplied to almost any extent, in proof of the deepest degeneracy of morals among masters, in all slaveholding coun-

tries. Their idleness and prodigality, besides being themselves vices from the fruitful soil of slavery, invariably introduce immoral customs and sports, as Sabbath breaking, horse racing, cock-fighting, gambling and dueling, and the other various devices of the idle and vicious, to kill time, and gratify their depraved passions and appetites. To this evidence from history, philosophy adds her decisive opinion, that man cannot, with safety to his character, be the depository of despotic power over individuals, especially if they are of the other sex, and bound and protected by no ties of natural affection. The facilities to low vice which such power imparts, it is not in the unregenerate nature of man, to resist. Whatever may be the effect on individuals, the community in all slaveholding states, is stamped with moral peculiarities, of the most odious character, the direct and inevitable results of this institution.

Slavery is an antagonist to Christianity. Whatever stand the church may take, in reference to the practice; whether she condemns, sanctions, or winks at slavery; its existence on her soil, in her field of labor, will cripple her energies, and impede her progress. Her refusal to hold slaves, her open condemnation of the principle, will excite the jealousy and hostility of slaveholders, whose attachment to the practice will, in the same ratio, strengthen their aversion to the Gospel. They will be apt not to tolerate, much less embrace, a religion, which attacks their idols. The case is still more deplorable, when the christian church holds slaves; for then the world will be tempted to reject her religion as an imposture; to deny with too much plausibility its divine origin and authority. Nor is this all. The general ignorance, imbecility and moral corruption, which slavery engenders, present a fearful degree of resistance to pure religion. There is also to be noticed in every slaveholding country, an alarming destitution of the means of grace, arising partly from the indifference or repugnance of the masters to the gospel, but chiefly from the withdrawal of the laboring classes from its support. What would become of the churches and schools of any of our northern towns, if all the real and moveable estate, and all the human beings in it were the property of a few men, and these few men were infidels? This question suggests the reason why the institutions of Christianity are few and far between in slave states. It must be so,

wherever that class, to whom the gospel is especially good tidings, are denied the privilege of supporting and propagating it.

Slavery is unfriendly to education. The masters will ordinarily do nothing for the instruction of their slaves, beyond what is required to make them good "instruments." It is naturally thought, that the arts of reading and writing, the very elements of a literary education, are acquirements, which cannot be allowed to the slave without diminishing his value as a beast of burden, facilitating his escape from bondage, and jeopardizing the life of his master; so that *custom*, if not the *law* of the land, commonly deprives him of this privilege. Nor does general education ever flourish in the community of masters. The indolence, the luxury, the vices of slaveholding countries, retard the intellectual progress of the people. The property is thrown into the hands of a sparse population, in the agricultural districts, rendering a system of common school instruction, next to impracticable. This obstacle is increased by the poverty of large masses of the free people, on whom the support of schools depends. The slaves are naturally put, by their proprietors, to the cultivation of the soil, and other laborious employments, which, as a badge of a servile condition, it is disgraceful for freemen to pursue; and as the children of slaveholders, grow up with these views, and without the invigorating influence of manual labor, both to body and mind, many of them soon dissipate their paternal estates, and sink into the lowest depths of poverty and imbecility. They form a class incapable either of appreciating the benefits of education, or of securing them for their wretched offspring. Such is the voice of history.

Slavery tends to impoverish a country. By confining labor almost entirely to the slave population, who cannot be expected to work with the energy and skill of freemen, the *productive* power of the nation, must be greatly diminished; and while less is produced, more will be expended, for the money of a slaveholder, like the prize in a lottery, comes too easily to be appreciated.

Nor is that economy of expenditure which in free states is the grand secret of accumulation, consistent with a slaveholder's notions of respectability. To maintain his rank, he deems the attendance of a slave to be indispensable; and hence the expenses of living are usually much greater in slave countries than in the free. It is also difficult and perhaps impracticable to cultivate the soil by slave labor, at the same expense to the proprietor, with which

he might cultivate it, by free labor, to much better advantage. But whatever may be the cause, whether it lies in the inefficiency and prodigality of the master, or in the carelessness and inactivity of the slave (for which let *others* blame him); the thrift and prosperity of free states, where other influences have been similar, stand in striking contrast with the waste and desolation of slave-holding countries.

Slavery weakens the State. Slaves are the natural enemies of society. They derive no benefit from the government, under which they live; they toil that others may rest, and sow that others may reap. They suffer continual outrage and wrong. Insurrections are the natural consequence, whenever there is the least prospect of success to encourage them. In such events, every slaveholder in the disturbed district is obliged to stand a sentinel at his own door. He can neither extend relief to his neighbors, nor obtain relief from them. His helplessness is still more complete and pitiable, when a foreign enemy or a revolutionist, calls the slaves to his standard, with the promise of liberty. Then nothing can prevent the subjugation of the country, the overthrow of the government, and the incalculable distress of the inhabitants; for servile wars are apt to be the most ferocious, sanguinary and revengeful.

Slavery imparts to a people a martial character, eminently hostile to the arts of peace, and to the security of human life. The implements of death are as familiar as "household words" to a slaveholding community. They are constantly borne about the person; it being thought necessary for defence against the violence or insolence of the slaves; but the spirit, which is thus cherished by the frequent sacrifice of their lives, and by habitual equipment for deeds of blood, is seen in the violent tempers, the ungovernable passions, the fatal encounters of the people; in the impetuosity with which they rush into war at every real and imaginary grievance and insult; and revenge their private wrongs with the steel of the duelist, if not of the assassin. Among slaveholders human life is too cheap to be secure.

Slavery is necessarily cruel. It has ever been a source of intolerable hardship and suffering. The kindest master is cruel, by holding his slaves liable to the treatment of cattle; by keeping them in constant apprehension of evil. The best witnesses also declare, that cruelty is the rule and kindness the exception. But

were it otherwise; were the instances of cruelty rare; even these would be a sufficient argument against conferring the legal power to inflict them. That law is unrighteous and despotic, which protects one man in wantonly tormenting another. The whole voice of history, however, proclaims, that this unrighteous power of the slaveholder, is bitterly felt by the *mass* of the slaves; that few escape the infliction of barbarous punishments; that all find the tender mercies of slavery to be cruel.

These are some of the legitimate and constant effects of slavery. Wherever the practice extensively prevails, it sacrifices all these interests. The morals and religion of the people, their intellectual improvement, their means of easy and independent subsistence, their private security, their national strength, together with the other most valuable interests, both of the masters and their slaves, are all sunk in this system of servitude.

We, therefore, think it evidently a dangerous doctrine, that man may rightfully be changed into an article of property, instead of owning himself; a doctrine, which no one can innocently sanction by his example or precepts. Nor is it possible to hold a slave without sanctioning the principle; for whatever may be the motive of the master, or the effect on "his chattel;" he declares by his conduct, that holding man as a piece of property is not in itself wrong. He claims that slavery is invariably right, at least not invariably wrong; and in either case, his claim will be regarded by his fellow slaveholders as a sufficient sanction of their conduct. A striking confirmation of this is afforded by a distinguished professor of theology in Missouri; who bought a slave, Ambrose, with the promise of freedom as soon as he should redeem himself by his labor. As this purchase was made ostensibly for the sole good of the slave, it was commended by multitudes. But what do we behold! When persecution drove David Nelson, for his manly and christian opposition to slavery, from his home in that state; and Marion College was summoned by the mob, to give in her adhesion to slavery; this professor satisfied and propitiated the demon, by avowing himself the owner of *one* slave, and a negotiator for others!

5. Slavery is invariably sinful, because *it is an abrogation of the golden rule*: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We have studiously avoided basing any part of our argument on the "peculiar" doctrines of the Bible; for the scripture argument is

elsewhere ably exhibited, and we wish to carry along with us the convictions of the mere deist as well as of the christian. Nor do we in our present argument deviate from our general design, since the authority of the "royal law" is as truly taught by the light of nature, as by the word of God. We have thus far argued the universal sinfulness of slaveholding from its relations to the divine government; to the rights and duties of the slave; to the interests of the slavcholding powers. We now solicit attention to the fact, that slavery excludes the slave from the fraternal sympathies of mankind, by forbidding their treating him as a fellow man, a neighbor, a brother. Slavery, theoretically at least, regards one human being as the mere tool of another; and though, in practice, it is sometimes more, and sometimes less inhuman and unfeeling, it is invariably a complete divestment of legal protection in the enjoyment of the rights and privileges of brotherhood in the human family. So long as A. holds B. in slavery, C. is restrained from discharging the offices of a neighbor and friend to B. Whatever instruction, whatever sympathy, whatever relief, whatever protection the slave enjoys, is through the indulgence of the slaveholder. This not only deprives the slave of rights, but is a standing prohibition to mankind, of those duties to the slave, which are enjoined in the second table of the law. No one is legally empowered to act the part of a neighbor to the slave; but on the contrary, to act this part would expose one to the most fearful penalties of the law. In the eye of the divine law, it is doubtless a duty to assist slaves to escape from bondage; to the eye of slave-law, it is a crime. Is this right? Can that be innocent in any case, which in every case pronounces illegal and penal, the discharge of the plainest and most urgent duties of humanity? Do you say the master *may allow* others to carry the Bible, and other blessings and consolations to his slave; in which case he is not guilty? Why not guilty? Has he any right to *forbid* others from discharging these duties? Certainly not. Then what right has he to the *power* of forbidding them? Can it be right to covet, or arrogate to ourselves, a power, which it is unlawful for us to exercise? Besides, the very possession of power to punish, as a crime, the duties and charities of life; the very existence in law of that all-absorbing claim of the master to exclusive intercourse with his slaves; is a restriction on the liberty of others to treat that slave as a man and a neighbor. No mas-

ter allows the *free* discharge of these duties ; no one can allow it, without ceasing to be a slaveholder.

This completes our argument in proof of the inherent and invariable sinfulness of holding human beings in the condition and under the liabilities of property.

The practice is an unwarrantable degradation of human beings, a usurpation of divine authority, an infringement of human rights, a sanction of a most destructive principle, an abrogation of the second table of the divine law. Either of these facts is sufficient evidence, that slaveholding is a **MALUM IN SE**.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

But lest any should not be fully satisfied, that slaveholding is a sin, which nothing can sanctify, we shall in conclusion, review the circumstances, by which some think it may be justified.

In the opinion of multitudes, it is right to *tolerate the continuance of slavery, after it has once been legally established*. Three things are said in support of this opinion. It is first alleged, that slavery so utterly disqualifies man for the enjoyment of freedom, that emancipation would manifestly prove a calamity to him instead of a blessing : and that hence the first and at present only duty of the slaveholding powers, is, to prepare him for freedom. A heavier charge, or one more untrue, cannot be brought against slavery. Dreadful as is the debasing, crushing influence of this species of servitude, which some are so ready to deny to be a *malum in se* ; it has not the power of rendering human beings more fit to be treated as things than as men ; a power, which transcends omnipotence, it being self-contradictory. It is said, secondly, that the sudden repeal of the laws which define and sustain slavery, would endanger the lives of the masters. We answer that the continuance of slavery endangers the lives of the masters ; and therefore on the objector's own principle, it ought at once to be abolished. It is also obvious, that if emancipation should take place, the slave, instead of being the victim and enemy of the government, would look to it for protection and regard it with favor ; and, instead of killing his master, would consider him his friend and requite his kindness with love and gratitude. Nor is it less obvious, that if a restoration to the slave of his stolen rights would expose the life of his master and the peace of society : it

might notwithstanding be a duty to restore them. We are required to sacrifice our lives, as well as our houses and lands, our wives and our children, rather than violate any fundamental principle of religion and morality. The maxim, that self-preservation is the first law of nature, in virtue of which we may innocently violate in self-defence, the immutable principles of righteousness, is a most detestable, pernicious, demoralizing doctrine, which ought to be rejected with abhorrence. The apologist for slavery must show some better proof of its innocence than the right of the oppressor to protection from the consequences of his own wrong. Let justice be done, though the heavens should fall. It is urged, thirdly, that when society has once sanctioned slavery, it would be a breach of faith towards those who have invested property in slaves, to wrest that property from them by an act of legislation. We reply : the right of abolishing slavery has from time immemorial been claimed and exercised by the governments of the world. They have, also, taken it upon themselves to correct abuses ; and there is no greater abuse than making man the property of his fellow. It is moreover the united testimony of moral philosophers, and writers on the first principles of law, that mankind have no right to enact laws contrary to the law of God ; and that all such enactments are, therefore, null and void from the beginning. The people are under a paramount obligation not to invest property under the mere paper-protection of *immoral* laws. We might meet the allegation in another form. A government has the right of abolishing slavery, or it has not. If it has the right, it is no breach of faith, to exercise it ; if it has not the right, it is not a slaveholding government. The individual master is then the only slaveholder ; and he surely will violate no right of property by manumitting his slaves.

Some claim it to be morally right to *do any thing which the laws of the land authorize*. On this principle, the manufacture, sale and use of intoxicating drinks ; licensed gambling, Sabbath breaking and prostitution, are not immoral. The legalized piracies of the Algerines, and their enslavement of christian captives ; the most wicked wars ; the legal burning of heretics ; were innocent acts, if not absolute virtues. On this principle, human laws can change the very nature of things, and there is no *essential* difference between right and wrong, justice and injustice, kindness and cruelty.

Some acknowledge it to be sinful to obtain slaves either by stealing or buying them, who nevertheless *feel justified in holding such as fall to them by gift or by inheritance*. The reason assigned, is, a slave bequeathed must be received. He is entailed on the testator's heir, we are told, whether he will or nil ; making him a slaveholder without his consent, so that none of the criminality of slaveholding attaches to him. How empty this plea is, appears from the naked statement, that no one can hold or use another as property without consenting to do it. A slaveholder is an *enforcer* of the laws of slavery, of the claim to man as property. Others can only confer on him the power or opportunity of enslaving men ; to be a slaveholder, he must actually claim the power, or avail himself of the opportunity. If a person bequeathes one an estate of slaves, without his consent, he is not responsible for their enslavement, until he hears of the bequest and accepts it. The testator and the laws of the land merely place it in his power to become a slaveholder. They cannot make him one in the sight of God. No man can be made a slaveholder by the will of another nor by an act of the Legislature, without his own act of ratification, any more than one can be made President of the United States without accepting the office.

The opinion prevails, to some extent, that it is unjust for an insolvent slaveholder, or one who has slaves with no other means of paying his debts, or one who has mortgaged his slaves, to set them free. This notion is based on the false assumption, that the claims of a common creditor to the amount due him, takes precedence of the claim of a man to the ownership of himself. Here are two rival claims. A. has no property, but is the reputed owner of a fellow man B., who has by nature, an equal right with any other man, to own himself. This the objector acknowledges. But then he says, that A. is bound not to manumit B., while he owes C. a debt, which cannot be paid, unless B. is retained in slavery, or sold to satisfy the demand. On this principle, it is of more importance for the maintenance of justice and the promotion of human happiness, that C. should recover a debt, than that B. should regain possession of his own person, with a right to pursue and communicate happiness ; to do and get good ; to serve God ! On this principle, too, the infamous law of the South, which holds emancipated slaves liable for debts, contracted by their master before their manumission, is just and honorable ! The sheriff, in

execution of this law, may innocently tear a freedman from his home, and sell him from his wife and children, into distant bondage, to satisfy the claim of a northern merchant on a bankrupt slaveholder ! This execrable sentiment arises from this primal error, that man can rightfully be made *property* ; and hence held, like other property, in trust for debts. We are under no higher obligation to pay our debts by dishonest means, that is, in this case, by the oppression and robbery of the innocent, than Herod was to keep his oath, by beheading John the Baptist.

That slaves may in some cases be willing to be slaves is thought by some to justify holding them in that state. Without denying that a case may occur, in which a slave shall prefer his chains to freedom, we say : (1) If a man is willing to be the property of another, it must be because slavery has dreadfully degraded and debased him. If human nature has one instinct more controlling and ennobling than another, it is the love of liberty. We see it at every age and in every condition of life. No freeman, however young, however old, however poor, is willing to be made a slave. We see the operation of this principle among slaves themselves, when they shake their chains and struggle for release. An aged female slave recently left her country and embarked for Liberia as the price of her freedom, expecting to die either on the passage or soon after her arrival in Africa, yet willing to make the sacrifice, if she might only *die free*. She spurned the thought of dying a slave. Such being the nature of man, we say, that no one in whom **THE MAN** has not been degraded, crushed and nearly annihilated, can be willing to remain a slave. If slavery makes such havoc of the noblest powers of the soul, it is a greater fiend than is commonly supposed, and the poor victim of its deadly power ought at once to be released from its grasp. (2) If it is right to enslave those, who are willing to be slaves and no others, which is the hypothesis of the argument ; then a slave washes his master in innocence or loads him with guilt, as often as he changes his mind from contentment with his lot to discontent. and from discontent to contentment. He has only to be willing to be a slave and then unwilling fifty times a day, to change as often the moral character of his master's conduct. Without pronouncing this an absurdity, we ask, is it right for one to sustain a relation, which subjects his actions, whether he will or not, to such moral fluctuations ? He might thus become a bad man in spite of him-

self, without the least alteration in his feelings or conduct. (3) If it is right to hold those only in slavery, who are willing to be slaves; no one is justified in *enforcing* the laws of slavery. The laws which declare one man the *property* of another, thus sanctioning his *forcible detention* as a chattel, are all wrong, and the *enforcing* of such laws is wrong. The argument is suicidal. It annihilates itself. It teaches that the laws of slavery ought to be repealed; that the *claim* to man as property ought not to be enforced. No case of slaveholding could survive the practical adoption of this principle, that the willingness of the slave to be a slave, is the only thing that can justify his enslavement.

If one has all his property invested in slaves, it is thought by some that he may rightfully retain them in slavery rather than impoverish himself by giving them their liberty. Such apologists for slavery, under certain circumstances, must have very erroneous or confused notions of justice. They acknowledge that slaves have ordinarily a right to themselves; that it would be wrong for one who has a competency of other kinds of property, to withhold from his slaves the ownership of themselves, and the proceeds of their labor. But the moment he invests *all* his property in slaves, his criminality as a slaveholder ceases; or his obligation to release his slaves extends only to the luxuries and superfluities of life; he may retain in bondage a sufficient number to satisfy the necessities of himself and family. They entirely overlook the *rights* of the slave. They appear to admit that he is in a pitiable condition, deserving the sympathy and assistance of the rich, from which he ought to be raised by the generosity of his wealthy proprietor: and not that he is a wronged and injured man, unjustly held in slavery, and demanding his freedom as an inalienable *right*. This right of the slave and not the claims of pity, is the reason why the great landholder ought to set him free, and it is an equally cogent reason why the poor widow ought to do it. It is merely a question of title in equity. Whom does justice, whom do the laws of heaven, declare to be the owner of this man? The man himself. But Mrs. A——, a person possessing no other property, has a title to him by the laws of South Carolina. Whose title ought to be sustained? Let us hear the parties.

Mrs. A. My title ought to be affirmed, because this slave is the only property in my possession. I must depend on my own exertions, on the kindness of friends, or on the charities of a cold

world, and have little or nothing to give to the poor, unless I appropriate to myself the wages of this man.

Slave. This mind, this body, these limbs, are *mine*. I received them from God, and am fraudulently deprived of them. Unless I can recover my right, I must remain without property, poorer than the poorest freeman, without liberty, without happiness.

Judge. As the claimant, Mrs. A. is unable to show "a Bill of sale from the Almighty," conveying this man to her, the Court decides against her claim and in favor of freedom.

This is a righteous decision. The principle, which requires one to free his slaves, if he can do it without impoverishing himself, and not otherwise, would, if carried out, establish a system of agrarianism. It requires the rich to distribute a part of their property because they are rich, and authorizes the poorer classes to retain their property, not on the ground of a valid title, but because they are poor. It also justifies the poor in stealing from the rich, and even in stealing *men*, for the relief of their wants. For if I may rightfully hold and use a stolen man rather than submit to honest poverty, I may assuredly steal one as a measure of relief.

Some think it would be wrong for slaveholders to *emancipate orphan children and superannuated and disabled slaves*. In such cases they consider slavery not only right, but *praiseworthy*. Their error lies in overlooking the following considerations.

(1) The master can free such slaves and still support them. (2) They may be supported as public paupers. (3) They may be supported as pensioners by the State; for their country is indebted to them for a portion of its wealth. (4) They are unsafe in the hands of an irresponsible master, whose *interest* it is, that the superannuated and worthless should die; and, that while they live, they should be kept at the least possible expense. Who would venture to trust a dear relative in such a condition? Nor is it safe for the orphan child to be left to the tender mercies of slavery. His master may now *intend* to give him his liberty as soon as he shall be able to provide for himself; but before that time arrives, the master changes his mind. A good offer for the boy proves too strong a temptation for him to resist; and the little fellow is sold into hopeless bondage. It may be said, in reply, that the master may now provide by law for the emancipation of his slaves at a certain age, and thus put it out of his power to sell

them, or to prevent their ultimate enfranchisement. But in this case his servants are no longer slaves. He has surrendered the chattel principle—the claim of property—and transmuted himself into a guardian, or the mere master of apprentices. Thereafter he may or he may not be guilty of wrong, according to the provisions of his apprenticeship system; but he is no longer guilty of slaveholding. We do not deny the lawfulness of holding an orphan or unprotected child as a ward or apprentice; yet the rights and interests of such children, require that civil government, and not an irresponsible master, should determine the period of their apprenticeship, and the conditions of it.

It is said by some to be *right to hold slaves until they can redeem themselves; especially if they were bought with that understanding*. Suppose (to state the case in the strongest manner) a slave comes to me with the request that I would buy him, and permit him to work out his freedom. I buy him. He engages to work for me, say, seven years; for which, in return, I engage to give him free papers. The question at issue, is, whether or not I have a moral right to hold this man in slavery, during these seven years, as a security for his purchase money. We say no such right exists. Our reasons are these. (1) After he had labored, as my slave, the whole period of seven years, I should be under no *legal* obligation to emancipate him. I could still retain him in my service or sell him to another person. He would have no security, that I should fulfil my engagement; and my interest in retaining him in slavery would be a dangerous, and probably a fatal trial to my virtue. Such promises are often made to slaves by reputedly pious masters, without being fulfilled. (2) However desirous I might be of fulfilling my contract, it might not be in my power. Before the expiration of the stipulated term of service, bankruptcy might throw my slave into the hands of others. I ought not to subject the object of my kindness, my fellow man, to such needless and fearful contingencies. (3) It is wrong to take a man's ownership of himself as a security for debt. We do not infer this from our argument to prove slavery a *malum in se*, a sin in itself, a sin in all circumstances; for the case we are now considering is urged in refutation of that argument. But we make our appeal directly to the moral sense of our reader. Would you think it right for your creditor, to take you into his absolute possession, with the power of selling you into perpetual slavery

in Georgia, merely as security for a debt to be paid by the labor of seven years? No, even if it was a debt of honor, for borrowed money, you would think it unreasonable, and sinful in him to ask for irresponsible, absolute power over you, as security. Some would think it unjust and oppressive even to imprison you, unless you were proved to be a defrauder. (4) A rich man, whose heart or conscience prompts him to assist a slave in redeeming himself, can do it as he would assist a poor freeman, by loaning him the redemption money and trusting him to refund it. If he is unable to run the risk, which would probably not much exceed the risk on the other plan, he is under no obligation to interfere. What relief he can extend to slaves, as well as to other sufferers, in consistency with paramount duties and without claiming and exercising over them unnatural authority, he ought to impart; and here his duty ends.

Some think it right *to hold slaves for life, provided they were bought at their own request to prevent their being sold away from their families.* To this it may be replied, (1) The buying of slaves, to prevent the rupture of domestic ties, can accomplish only a little of what it proposes in any slaveholding country. It is as true in this commerce as in any other that a demand creates a supply. About so many slaves will be sold from those parts, where there is a redundancy of this population, to meet the demand for labor in those parts where there is a deficiency. A slave is about to be sold. Moved to pity by his distress at the prospect of being torn away from his connexions, you buy him. The slave trader soon finds another to fill his place, who is separated forever from friends equally near and dear. You shielded the head of one man; but the blow fell on another. Humanity gained little or nothing. (2) The act of saving a human being from exile, is no excuse for subsequently confining him to your own premises, and working him without wages. You cannot be justified in robbing a man, merely because you have rescued him from the hands of a robber. An act of kindness is no apology for an act of injustice. (3) All slaveholders sanction slavery by their practice. The motives of those who buy slaves from compassion, are either not known or are soon forgotten. Their conduct is visible to all the world, lending the influence of their example to the reputation and perpetuity of slavery. For the sake of mitigating the evils of slavery, they assist in perpetuating the system itself.

(4) They injure their own characters. No one's moral principles and passions are safe, while he possesses and exercises the despotic power of a slaveholder ; and he has, therefore, no right to expose himself, at the solicitation of pity, to such a fiery trial.

It is a current opinion, *that laws forbidding emancipation, justify the master in holding his slaves.* Answer. (1) Such prohibitory laws are immoral, and ought to be disobeyed. The divine law is the paramount law of every country. All human laws derive their legitimate authority from this source ; and can therefore impose no obligation to act in opposition to the fundamental principles of morality. If, therefore, slaveholding is sinful, when emancipation is permitted by society ; it is equally a sin, when prohibited. Human laws may be divided into three classes. First ; laws against crimes or immoralities. These are of absolute, immutable obligation, because they are merely re-enactments of the divine law. Secondly ; laws of general policy, not founded in fundamental morality, but consistent with it. The obligation to obey these laws results from their utility to society, and from the right, which God has conferred on civil rulers, to govern the people by wholesome legislation. Laws of this class may, in some cases, be innocently broken ; as, for example, the law requiring certain persons to do military duty, and imposing a fine for failure. The man, who prefers to bear the penalty rather than obey the law, is not considered a malefactor. Thirdly ; laws which violate the principles of the moral law ; such, for instance, as violate treaties, prohibit the worship of God, or desecrate the Sabbath. Laws of this class, so far from being obligatory, cannot innocently be obeyed. We are not only at liberty to prefer bearing the penalty, but are bound to prefer it. Such is the law forbidding emancipation. (2) Laws against emancipation are so evidently unjust and oppressive, that they have seldom been enforced in any slaveholding country. Even in the United States, notwithstanding a strong feeling against the increase of the free people of color, it rarely happens, that slaves manumitted by their masters, in opposition to the law, are ever deprived of their liberty. When the Quakers released a large number of slaves in South Carolina, the government arrested and sold a few of them, being alarmed at the probable influence of manumission, on such principles, and on so large a scale. We are convinced on careful inquiry, that similar instances are very rare, compared with the whole number of emancipations. It is not, therefore, probable,

that the emancipator would be fined, and his slaves sold to a worse master. Such laws ever have been, and probably ever will be, to a good extent, a *dead letter*. (3) The most effectual way of obtaining the repeal of laws against emancipation, is to disregard them. Suppose A. sets his slaves free, notwithstanding prohibitory laws, because he believes slaveholding to be contrary to the divine law. The government, seizing his freedmen, sells them to the highest bidder. This affords A. an opportunity to preach with tremendous effect against the law, which sanctions this outrage. If he says nothing, his conduct speaks; it condemns the law; it reproveth the officers who execute it; it thunders damnation in the ears of the auctioneer, and of every man who dares bid for men made free for conscience sake; it arouses the slumbering reflections of the community. His example proves contagious. B. frees his slaves; C. follows suit; and soon it is found, a strong public sentiment exists against reducing emancipated men again to slavery. The officers of government shrink from the disgrace of arresting them, and purchasers cannot be found. Thus laws against emancipation go into desuetude. On the other hand, while those who disapprove of these infamous laws, yield obedience to them, they will never become unpopular. (4) Were the better class of masters at once to free themselves from all connection with slavery, as have the Quakers and Reformed Presbyterians of this country, not only the laws against emancipation, but slavery itself would soon expire. It is the men, who treat their slaves with some show of humanity, the moderate drinkers of the system, and not the vile and cruel, the inebriates, who wallow in the mire of slavery, showing undisguisedly its real features, who sustain the tottering pillars of the institution. Let all who pretend to be conscientious, abandon the practice, and all others would be too indelibly disgraced and intolerably convicted, to postpone repentance, at least in things visible, if not in spirit. It has been objected to these views of duty, that the slaves of kind and christian masters would be the first to obtain their freedom, only to lose it again, by falling into the hands of men of less principle. This may be true. But in the darkest view of the case, the plan would purge the church of slavery, and congregate the slaves in the hands of the worst portion of society; and this, if an evil, ad interim, to the slaves, would be a blessing to them ultimately, for it would shorten the period of their servitude. Or if their personal good were not promoted, the general good, the good of the slaves

as a class, the good of society, might require their masters to set them free, as a testimony against the law prohibiting emancipation, and against slavery itself. Slavery cannot long exist in a christian country without the sanction and support of the church.

Some have urged, that, inasmuch as no slave can be *legally freed in some countries, without an act of the Legislature, a master may be UNABLE to emancipate his slaves, and therefore being a slaveholder by necessity, he is one innocently*. Our definition of a slaveholder relieves this point. A master may indeed be unable to give his slaves *legal* emancipation on the soil; but he can tell them they are free, he can refuse to enforce the laws of slavery, he can let them go whither they please, he can pay them wages for services rendered him, he can make them absolutely free, unless others interfere; and for their interference he is not responsible. By doing this, if he can do no more, he ceases to hold or use man as property, to treat the image of God as a thing; he ceases to be a slaveholder.

Some think, that slaveholding may be justified by the *ignorance* of the slaveholder; that it is unjust to charge him with guilt, because he may know no better! Answer. (1) Then it is exceedingly important to instruct him. When the commandment comes, his *sin* will revive. (2) What is the cause of his ignorance? Is it not a covetous disposition, a proud heart, a selfish love of slavery, which makes him unwilling to see its real character? Could he fail to perceive something wrong in subjecting a fellow man, his equal and his brother, to the condition and uses of a thing, if he loved that brother as himself, and had a sacred regard for his rights? If not; if his *slaveholding spirit* is the sole cause of his ignorance, can that ignorance justify his conduct? (3) He must necessarily know, that man as man, that every man, has rights, which he is bound to respect; and that slavery is a violation of them. The usages of society and long familiarity with a practical denial of this self-evident truth, may have drowned reflection, purblind his understanding, and stupified his conscience. The truth, however, must still remain in possession of his mind, ready to assert its existence and claims as soon as the question of duty is agitated. To deny this is to deny the self-evidence of the doctrine of human rights; or to assert, that the mind may lose its capacity of perceiving intuitively the moral wrong of subjecting all that one man has and is to the absolute disposal of another, who is not bound, on his *part*, to render any thing in return. (4) No

man, however ignorant, can be a slaveholder, without doing violence to his conscience. It is a universal principle in morals, which Paul asserts in Rom. xiv:23. "He that doubteth, is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." In other words:—Whoever does an act in itself right, supposing it to be wrong, or doubting whether it is right, contracts guilt by so doing; since he does not act in "faith," or in a firm persuasion of the propriety of his conduct, and with a scrupulous desire to please God. By consenting, in a case of doubt, to run the risk of doing wrong, he manifests a culpable indifference to divine authority. He does violence to his conscience. To act with a good conscience, it is requisite, that we should honestly investigate and unhesitatingly approve the moral character of our conduct. He who has not yet raised the inquiry, whether or not slaveholding is consistent with the divine law, is damned if he holds slaves, because he holds them not of faith. It cannot be that what he does so heedlessly, can be done in a firm conviction of duty to God; and if it is not, it is "sin." He who has inquired into the moral nature of slavery, must have a mind of miraculous inconsistency, if his honest and unhesitating conclusion is, that he serves God by holding men in slavery. The very inquiry supposes a doubt of the conclusion, and every step in the investigation, if conscientiously prosecuted, (and otherwise it cannot satisfy the mind,) must render the conscientious holding of slaves still more impracticable. If slaveholding is a sin, as this plea of ignorance supposes, it is absurd to think, that honest inquiry will not detect it. As ignorance of the right or wrong of slavery makes inquiry a duty, which conscience cannot overlook; so inquiry can only bring the wrong more fully to light, and arm the conscience more completely against it.

It is said that the principle of *doing to others as we would they should do to us*, may make it one's duty to hold slaves. The argument may be reduced to a syllogism.

Major Premise. The principle of impartial love requires a master to treat his slaves as they may reasonably wish to be treated.

Minor Premise. It is unreasonable for them to desire freedom.

Conclusion. Whatever they actually desire, their master is bound to retain them in slavery.

A fallacy in the minor premise destroys the argument. It is reasonable for slaves to desire their freedom. (1) They have a

right to freedom. Who says it is unreasonable for men to desire their rights? (2) Freedom would be a blessing to them. So they think. Were we in their circumstances, such would be our feeling. We should long for liberty. Who can say it would be no blessing to regain their dearest rights—to gratify their most ardent aspirations after the common prerogatives and privileges of our nature? Who is authorized to assert that they would soon lose their recovered rights, and fall into the power of a worse master? They would at least have a prospect of retaining their liberty; they would at least learn to regard themselves as men, they would at least participate, as instruments, in the precious testimony of their master against slavery. Nor is it true that he must expose them, by emancipation, to re-enslavement. He can give them a pass to a free State. He can bring them fully and securely under the genial influence of self-ownership. May they not reasonably desire this inalienable right, this inestimable blessing, this *sine qua non* to the service of God and the pursuit of happiness?

There is moreover a most dangerous principle at the basis of this argument, viz. that the wise in their own conceits, may rightfully exercise despotic power for the good of the ignorant; that the powerful may hold absolute dominion at their private discretion, for the benefit of such as they deem incapable of taking care of themselves! The good of the people is the plea of all the despots on earth; and yet a despotism is so bad a form of government, that no people will willingly submit to it. The slaveholder's power being of this absolute description, is not a safe deposit in any hands, on any pretence.

It is contended by some to be right for a slaveholder to *retain his power for the purpose of keeping the slaves under his parental protection, provided he uses his power for no other object, pays them for their labor, and refuses to sell them*. We think otherwise. He is not, perhaps, so wicked a slaveholder as some others; but he is wicked for being a slaveholder. (1) He holds slaves. He has merely ceased to make man-stealing a money making business. He is still a man-stealer. He withholds from men the stolen right of liberty. While he refuses them free papers or passes; while he denies their right to leave him; while he recovers runaway slaves; what he does for their comfort, can only be taken in the light of an indulgence. (2) His refusing to sell them, his paying them wages, is not a legal or permanent ar-

rangement. He holds them subject to all the liabilities of his other property; and to all the probable caprices and changes of his own mind. (3) He is nothing but a slaveholder under conviction; he is not yet converted. He is attempting to amend his manners, but his reformation is incomplete. Let him acknowledge all the rights of his slaves, with heartfelt repentance for the great sin of making man a thing; then God will forgive him.

Once more. George McDuffie, late governor of South Carolina, has distinguished himself as the leader of a party at the South, whose infamous creed, is, that the general good of a *country requires the enslavement of the laboring classes*. According to his political and moral philosophy, the best construction of society divides the people into two distinct orders, the owners of the soil, and the unrequited operatives, **PROPERTY HOLDERS** and **PROPERTY**. This doctrine asserts, that almost all the citizens of the free States ought to be slaves; for happily there are few among us, who esteem it not an honor and a duty to labor with their hands. We cannot condescend to reply to such a scandalous sentiment. Many of the "circumstances," which have come under our eye, are sufficiently feeble justifications of slavery, to be passed in silence; but this is too insulting to decency and common sense, to be honored with an attempt at refutation.

In conclusion. If man can be justified by none of the foregoing circumstances, to hold his fellow man as property, what can justify him? We have passed in view all the most plausible pleas in his defence. Can he be defended? Is he not under obligation to let his brother go free? We speak not of the *American* slaveholder merely, but of every one, who claims a fellow being as his slave. We speak not of *cruel* slaveholders merely, but of *the* slaveholder, of *all* slaveholders. Is not slaveholding in all cases sinful? Is it not a **MALUM IN SE**?

REMARKS.

1. In the preceding argument it was necessary for our purpose, to show, that every system of servitude, which has the "chattel principle" for an element, is sinful, however it may have originated, whatever checks it may contain on the power of the master, and however mildly it may be administered; and that this is also true of every conceivable instance of slaveholding. Whether or not this has been proved to the satisfaction of every mind, we think none can honestly attempt to justify the slavery of these United

States, which having its origin in piracy, is perpetuated, in each instance, by withholding from a confessedly innocent man, his unforfeited and most sacred rights.

2. *An entire abolition of slavery consists in restoring to slaves the absolute ownership of themselves.* Some have thought that emancipation from slavery involves the immediate investiture of the slave with political rights, as well as with self-ownership. Our definition exposes this error. Such investiture may attend emancipation, but is no necessary part of it. Whether it is just or wise to withhold from any class of persons, a share in the government under which they live ; or whether the slaves ought to be set free and endowed at the same time with all the privileges of a legal voter ; is a question perfectly distinct from the right or wrong of slavery. Others have erred still more strangely. They have supposed that the abolition of slavery releases the slaves, at once, from all the restraints of men, and sets them afloat to prey upon society. They say, "it lets them loose." Nothing is more false. Emancipation is merely a recognition of the slave's manhood, of his right to himself, to his family, to his liberty, to the proceeds of his labor. Instead of letting him loose from healthy restraint, it places him under the protection and control of all the laws which govern freemen.

3. Were it true, as the advocates of slavery blasphemously allege, that slavery is sanctioned by the Bible, the fact would disprove the divinity of that blessed Book. No evidence of its inspiration could equal this internal evidence of a human origin. Whoever will reflect, that holding man in the *condition of property*, cannot be right, unless treating him *as property* is right, must admit, that the Bible disallows of slavery in all cases, or else authorizes the trade in human beings, with all the inseparable accompaniments of restraint, privation and discipline. But if the Bible authorizes this trade, it is the most inconsistent of books ; it authorizes the very oppression and robbery, which it condemns. It is also a bad book ; for it sanctions deeds, against which the religion of nature protests. But this is not the character of the Bible. Infidels think it is. The common argument which they urge at the South, against christianity, is, that it sanctions slavery. They say, we know slavery is a violation of every principle of justice and benevolence ; but you christians contend, that it is authorized by your sacred books. Such a religion never came down from heaven. How humiliating and affecting it is, that good men should promote infidelity

by cloaking their sins under false interpretations of the Bible—interpretations fatal to the christian argument.

4. *The invariable sinfulness of slaveholding is a doctrine of great practical value.* At first view it might seem quite harmless to admit the innocency of some conceivable cases of slaveholding. In practice it is far otherwise. No instance can arise which does not involve principles, in the admission of which numerous other cases of slaveholding will find ample justification. Admitting in *general* terms, that enslaving men is not necessarily sinful, has a still worse tendency ; since few slaveholders will fail to find in it a covert from the accusations of conscience, and the frown of an indignant public sentiment. On the other hand, much is gained by establishing the broad principle asserted in this essay. It enables us to make a direct attack on slavery itself, to strike at the vitals of the system, instead of leveling our artillery against incidental evils, which is more apt to give offence, and far less effective. While we admit the general excellence and humanity of the masters, we can assert and urge the duty of immediate and unconditional emancipation ; we can charge them with guilt for withholding liberty from those to whom liberty is due ; we can arrest their consciences by showing the insufficiency of their kindness and kind intentions, to justify them ; we can administer reproof for delaying, even a day, to do justice to their slaves. While our doctrine speaks to the hearts of slaveholders, with accusations of guilt, by asserting the duty and pre-eminent safety of immediate emancipation, in all cases ; it tables its charges against all abettors of the practice, against its apologists, against those who hire slaves of their masters, against all who sustain and patronize the institution. We expect soon to realize the appropriate results of this doctrine, in the repentance of the better class of slaveholders, in restraining men from purchasing slaves on the pretence of improving their condition, in abolishing the pernicious practice of hiring them ; in short, in the perfect overthrow and destruction of the system. May the God of the oppressed grant us speedily, the fruition of our hopes !